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New-Church College Lectures

DEGREES

The Steps of the Movement.

REV. HENRY GORDON DRUMMOND

LONDON, 1908

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DEGREES

DEGREES

Three Lectures

DELIVERED AT

THE NEW-CHURCH COLLEGE

LONDON

BY THE

REV. HENRY GORDON DRUMMOND

JAMES SPEIRS
1 BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON
1908

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Council of the New Church College,
Islington, London.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

THE brief course of public lectures contained in the present volume was arranged for by the Council of the New Church College, and is the sixth course delivered under its auspices.

The lectures were given in the Library of the College on the 14th, 21st, and 28th of May, 1908, and a strong hope was expressed by all who heard them that they should be published, as calculated to be of eminent service to a wide circle of earnest students.

The purpose of the Council in instituting these special courses of lectures is to provide a treatment which, while academic, is yet popular, of the deeper subjects of New Church theology and philosophy, or of any subject of the day on which the New Church teaching is calculated to throw clear and certain light.

That the objects proposed have been kept in view may be seen from a statement of the subjects which have been dealt with in the former courses. They were: The New Church Doctrine of the Incarnation; Faith, Doubt, and Unbelief; Correspondence the Key to Causation and Revelation; the New Church Doctrine of Inspiration and the Higher Criticism; Heredity.

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I

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DEGREES

which another movement, the responsive life of the recipient begins.

Our postal system might be cited as affording a provisional illustration of the three sections. We see in it a well-ordered system of communication operating through a number of distinct stages. A letter posted at a suburban office is taken by carrier to a general sorting-house. Thence it is despatched by train, if need be, to the town to which it is addressed. On arrival there it is met and taken to a distributing centre, and sent on by another carrier to its final destination. The various stages in this journey, each of which may be seen to be distinct and complete in itself may be taken as the " Degrees " of the system. The movement by which the letter passes from point to point may be regarded as its " Influx," and the destination is as its plane of " Ultimates."

With this as a kind of skeleton thought in mind—a very incomplete, but not, therefore, an incorrect picture, of the general subject—we may apply ourselves to the development of the section immediately before us.

The fact that all things in the created universe are related to and affected by one another is already familiar to most thinkers. It has been accepted as one of the fundamentals, both of science—which is defined as the "reasoned digest of tested knowledge"—and of philosophy, " the science that investigates causes." Students of New Church philosophy are well assured that there can be no disconnected phenomena of any kind, but that things are what they are by virtue of their relations. Their relations are of two kinds (1) of resemblances and similarities, like natures, qualities, or uses; and (2) of cause and effect. These two kinds of relation are quite distinct, although they may be seen to exist together in the same object.

A striking resemblance between a father and son might be pointed to as presumptive evidence of their relation to one another. There may be, and, as a matter of fact, often is, along with that relation a similarity of appearance, gesture, tone of voice, etc. But the essential relation is not, therefore, one of resemblance; for the resemblance may exist without the relation, and the relation without the resemblance. The relation itself involves the elements of cause and effect.

Things may be distinguished from one another in their degrees by means of differences. But differences do not constitute relations of any kind. Even when we suppose ourselves to be thinking of things in their difference from one another, we are measuring the difference, consciously or unconsciously, by means of some resemblance we have previously recognised. Thus to say that red differs from blue is to think of each as a colour, which is a point of resemblance.

This is well expressed by Mr. G. K. Chesterton, in his book on "Heretics," where he says:—

"Our mental state may be very different from that of somebody else some thousands of years back; but it cannot be entirely different, or else we should not be conscious of a difference . . . the fact of two things being different implies that they are similar. The hare and the tortoise may differ in the quality of swiftness, but they must agree in the quality of motion."—p. 82.

The doctrine of Degrees is concerned with the relation of things. It has regard to their resemblances and contacts, but not to their differences. For there are no degrees in difference. Difference is a mere negative, and has no quality, neither can it be perceived. And one of the practical results of a careful study of this doctrine is that it disposes us to give differences—even differences of religious opinion—quite a secondary place in our regard.

It is pre-eminently the doctrine of unification. It throws its net over the universe, and leaves nothing out of its draught. It is a whole philosophy of creation and of life. It is, indeed, very philosophy itself, for it is the prime investigator of essential causes. It is, moreover, the science of seeing things correctly, teaching us that if we would see things as they really are we must regard them not in their separateness, but in their co-existence and correspondence; that is, in their relations.

It may be useful to take up at this point the elementary enquiry as to the literal meaning of the term which gives us our title. I have already defined it provisionally in what must be for us its specific and technical sense—the sense in which we are to apply it in our philosophy. But technical senses are open to suspicion, as involving things forced or imported. We turn, therefore, to the word as it occurs in our English dictionary, and find it revealed to us there in its nakedness and simplicity, as derived from the Latin prefix *de*, signifying down or away from, and *gradus*, a step. The force of the *de* appears more clearly in the verbs *depart*, to part away from, and *descend*, to climb down from. If *degree* were a verb it would be the verb to step from.

The idea of movement, it will be observed, is involved in each section of the word. In the first place, as well as in all subsequent places, a degree is concerned with movement. It is not a stationary thing, even in its simple dictionary sense. It may be represented by what is still, as in the rung of a ladder. Its movement may be recorded in things at rest. To use a Scriptural illustration, the shadow may travel " ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz," and the inert dial declare the measure of the wonder; but the assurance thus given to the mind of him for whom the miracle has been performed comes not from the dial, but from the movement of the shadow. The ten degrees are the steps of the movement.

The Steps of the Movement.

A step is a movement of the foot. If I carry my foot from one point to another in space, as in walking, I mark a degree in its original meaning. I indicate the thing represented by the word, and represented also by the portion of space or of ground traversed. The thing itself is concerned with movement and cannot be regarded apart from it.

And a fact faces us just here, belonging to the essence of the doctrine. All degrees are concerned with movement. They are to be thought of as processes, rather than attainments.

We see in the step a primitive method of measurement, a unit of development. The unit is determined by a capacity which in the beginning is physical. The mind arrives at a conception of the extent of the ground beneath the feet, by causing the feet to step over it. That is to say, it sees it in a certain relation to itself, and itself in relation to it. And from this it may be said to get its first lesson with respect to degrees. It forms from this repeated experience an abstract idea which it is able to apply to other things. It discerns, moreover, in and from the same experience, two extremely significant facts, in reference to all movement: one is, that movement cannot proceed without interruption; and the other, that it cannot exist without relation. Life travels for us always in prescribed stages, each of which involves its own set of relations. If I cross the road I do so by repeated contacts and resistances, which are so many relations between my feet and the ground. I make my way one step at a time, realising my limitations afresh, and finding it necessary to re-adapt myself to the conditions, at every point of attainment; and the natural stretch of my two feet is the measure and sign of my capacity to make and to mark progress.

And this idea of a measured movement, involving new and distinct relations, is retained and may be recognised in every application of the word "degree." Whether we take it in a general or a particular sense, as the unit of space, the section of a circle, the university rank, the social status, or the metaphysical concept, we find the picture in the term. It is a step from one condition or attainment to another, a complete stride which is a measure of capacity.

Now movement implies what is moving. You cannot have a step without a stepper. There is no pure motion. Motion exists only in substances which are subjects of motion. There must be something from which it comes, and something in which it is. We hear of heat, light, sound, and even gross matter, as forms of motion, which, if it means anything at all, must mean that they are manifestations of substance in states of motion. But the question remains to be answered: What is the thing of which we experience thus the moving effects? We may talk of steps, and processes, and planes of life, as though they had some existence apart from the substances which are their subjects, but in such case they would be mere figments of the imagination. Movements are substances in motion. There is no step without a stepper. There are no abstract degrees.

The doctrine of degrees may be usefully discussed in abstract ways, but it is to be clearly understood that it is neither an abstract doctrine nor a mere doctrine of abstractions. It has to do with substances and forms as they exist in both natural and spiritual worlds. It concerns the grass and the sky, the singing of birds, and the laughter of children, the sunshine that warms the body and the love that warms the heart. It is involved in the commonest experiences of life. It belongs to these things because it belongs in its fulness to man. It gives us the whole measure of a man, in the true order, and to the farthest stretch of his being.

And here we may be able to realise, possibly to our surprise, that there is nothing in our technical use of the term "degrees" of more private interpretation than just this: it is the elimination of the ideas of stillness and abstraction. Degrees are (1) things of life, and (2) things of substance.

The fact is a suggestive one that material things, once they have been analysed and discriminated, measured, numbered, and arranged, have acquired a mental and subjective quality. All our arithmetic is subjective in its results, as well as in its processes. Its findings belong to the mind. Our geometry, as the science of superficial measurement, is the expression not so much of the surfaces it measures as of the mental condition from which it proceeds. The simplest sum in addition shows a product of mind in its relation to matter. The sum does not exist in the matters added together. When we say, "twice one are two," the twice and the two are mental conceptions. Nature only knows the first of numbers; the second is outside of her domain.

So is it with degrees. They are to be seen depicted for us in the things of nature, or the material universe; as even, in a sense, existing there; but we must not lose sight of their subjective quality. They have a relation to nature; but their relation to the mind is more vital and intimate. They exist in their fulness in the mind. The mind apprehends them always and only in terms of itself. The things of nature serve it as the dial of Ahaz. It finds within its own being, the mystery that moves across the dial's face. The mind is the moving thing.

Touching the question of the abstract, Swedenborg, to whom we are indebted for all our instruction on this subject, tells us that, while we may have abstract knowledge of degrees,

> "to know these things and not to see them in their application to existing things is simply to know abstractions which remain in the memory only so long as the mind is in analytical ideas from metaphysical thought; for a mere knowledge of abstractions is like an airy something which flies away; but when abstractions are applied to such things as are in the world, they become like what is seen with the eyes on earth, and remains in the memory." D.L.W. 189.

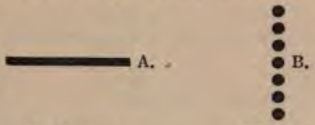
Again he says,

> "When it is said that degrees are such in respect to each other the meaning is that substances are such in their degrees." —196.

And then, to remind us that abstract speaking still serves a use, he continues,

> "This manner of speaking of degrees is abstract; that is, universal, which makes the statement applicable to every subject or thing which is in degrees of this kind."

There are two kinds of degrees, just as there are two kinds of relations. They have nothing in common with one another, although they exist simultaneously in the things which are their subjects. They are inseparable from substances, and nothing can exist without them. To one Swedenborg has given the name "Continuous," and to the other "Discrete." The distinction between these two kinds of degrees may be represented to the eye to begin with by means of a simple diagram showing two lines, one produced horizontally, without a break, and the other, perpendicularly, by a succession of dots, thus :—



Continuous. **Discrete.**

Continuous degrees are to be seen in the relations of resemblance and similarity, or of more and less, and constitute what is here intended to be expressed by the horizontal and unbroken line A. Discrete degrees are to be seen in the relations of cause and effect, occupying different planes of altitude, which are suggested by the perpendicular line B.

The distinguishing terms, like the lines in the diagram, are to be taken as only approximately descriptive. Words, at best, are indifferent wrappings of thought. The ideas they offer are so delicate and interior, so subtle, elastic and fluent, that they continually transcend and overflow the boundaries of their expression. They are, moreover, not unlike photographs, which easily mislead us if we are not familiar with the things they represent. What they show us is one aspect or facet of the thing—taken at a particular moment, from a particular point of view, and fixed there. It is no longer the moving sphere of life.

The term "continuous," comes before us as the name of a kind of degrees having "nothing in common with, and by no means to be confounded with," another kind; and yet we find that the same word is used in referring to the other kind, for we read:—

> "Creation is a continuous work from the Creator, who is its common Centre, even to outmosts, through discrete degrees, just as end is continued through causes into effects."—Angelic Idea of Creation.

And we are also informed that animals and plants are "continuations of creation," although it is obvious that their creation is a continuation "through discrete degrees."

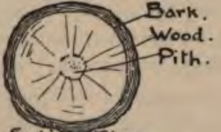
If there were no continuity there would be no degrees at all.

There is no inconsistency here, but a frank recognition of the fact that absolute verbal exactitude is impossible in dealing with such matters. We are not required to tie our faith down to mere terms, or to rest satisfied with set phrases, but are expected to be ever in the effort to get behind and beyond these, to those fluent and living things that refuse their limitations. And we may proceed to do this by first of all examining the terms.

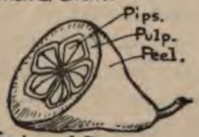
Continuous, according to the dictionary, means what is "joined, without intervening space," "uninterrupted connection," "without intervals," "close union of parts"; while *discrete* means what is "distinct," "disjoined," "interrupted." Each would seem from such definitions to express just what the other is not, and not to express anything the other is. They confirm the doctrine in its declaration that the two have nothing at all in common. The conclusion would, however, of itself, help us very little in the understanding of either term, and might even lead us astray. Just as there is a continuity to be recognised in things discrete, the continuity of a cause proceeding to its effect, so there may be the appearance of what is discrete in things continuous. Instances will presently be shown, by way of illustration. Let us, in the meantime, note and confirm the fact that, as there are no degrees of difference, so there are none of identity. Identity cannot be qualified. Things conceived of as in all respects the same are indistinguishable in the mind, while things conceived of as in no respect alike cannot be thought of at one and the same moment. Before degrees of any kind can be recognised in a subject there must be something of sameness present along with something of difference. There must be parts which are connected and yet separate. And the paradox approaches its height when it is seen that where the separation is most distinct, as in parts related by discrete degrees, the connection is closest. For discrete degrees are homogeneous. They issue from the same source, and are essentially of the same nature; just as a smile may be said to issue from the same source as the emotion which it expresses, and to be homogeneous with it.

Interrupted successions of things, the relations of which do not involve what is meant by the term discrete, may be seen in a flight of birds, or a field of wheat. Close unions, presenting the appearance of what is all-of-a-piece, and yet involving the discrete

Separate Ears of Wheat – Not Discrete.



Section of Stem.



Section of Pear.

distinction, may be seen in the stem of a tree or the construction of any fruit. In the wheat, for example, we have a number of separate ears, each presenting the same idea and belonging to the same plane. In the stem of the tree we find pith, wood, and bark, each distinct in all respects both as to character and function, yet forming one apparently continuous whole. In the fruit we have pips, pulp, and peel, similarly distinguished.

It is in discrete degrees that our philosophy of creation appears. They hold the secret and proclaim the way of investigation into all causes; they show the true inwardness of things, and enable us to see,

. . . . the mysteries that circle under
The outward shell and skin of daily life;

to pass from the circumference to the centre, from effect to cause, and "from nature up to nature's God."

Swedenborg writes,—

> "I am not aware that anything has been known, hitherto, about discrete degrees or degrees of height; only continuous degrees or degrees of breadth have been known; yet nothing of real truth about cause can become known without a knowledge of degrees of both kinds." D.L.W., 189.

Again, he describes it as:

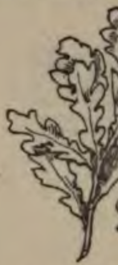
> "A key to lay open the causes of things and to give entrance into them. Without this knowledge scarcely anything of cause can be known; for without it the objects and subjects of both worlds seem to have but a single meaning, as if there were nothing in them beyond that which meets the eye."—184.

That there should be little knowledge in the world of discrete degrees need not surprise us when we remember that men see things from the level of their own attainment, and, according to their states. Continuous degrees are such distinctions as may easily be apprehended by those who are in touch with the mere shell of life. The material universe presses hard upon the bodily senses, and can hardly fail to make itself known in measurements of more or less, and gradations of light to shade, heat to cold, etc. As a matter of fact, it is known always and only in such measurements and gradations. These are its degrees of "breadth," or extension along one line, the line of superfices. Similar degrees may, however, be seen on each of the planes in the ascending order of discrete degrees, represented by our perpendicular line of dots, B (page 11). To indicate this, each dot might be extended laterally so as to form a series of parallel lines, thus:—

Continuous Planes, discreted from one another.

The objects and subjects of each plane are related to the other objects and subjects of the same plane in such a continuous way, and are recognisable on the plane to which they belong in measurements and gradations of more and less. So we may have degrees of more and less of the same kind of such immaterial things as thought, feeling, mental capacity, knowledge, judgment, and all qualities of character, just as we may have degrees of more or less of physical energy, heat and light, colour, sound, volume, density, etc. Such things may increase or decrease without changing their character, quality, or function. They may be essentially the same in their least forms as in their greatest, as one drop of water from the sea may be of the same character as all the rest, being composed of the same elements in the same relative proportions and expressible by the same formula.

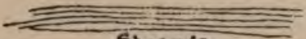
One oak-leaf is separated from another by a distinct interval of space, but is not, therefore, discretely separated. They are related in form, substance, character, and function—in all the features that constitute each the leaf of the oak. There is no difference between them as to essentials. They are distinguished only by degrees of more or less. One is larger, or greener, or more irregular in outline than the other. One is higher up on the tree, or nearer to the eye. It belongs to another branch, or to another tree; it may be to a tree in another part of the world. The width of the globe may divide them. But when we think of them. the thought is as of things essentially one. The leaf would, indeed, appear to be more continuously connected with the branch from which it springs, for such a connection to the eye is clearly without a break or interval of any kind. Nevertheless, the leaf and the branch are on different levels so far as the life and growth of the tree are concerned. They are distinguished, relatively, as effect from cause, or as the thing proceeding from that from which it proceeds. And the relation between them is such that, while it is retained, no possible process of blending, adding to, or taking from either would ever convert them into similars. The difference is involved in the relation, and the relation in the difference. No difference could be greater, and no relation could be closer. Questions of comparison, the like and the unlike, the near and the far, the joined or the disjoined, have no place or pertinency here. The branch, as the bringer-forth of the leaf, is in the mother-function, and the interval between



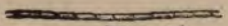
Oak Leaves
and Stem.

them is greater than can be measured either by æons of time or worlds of space. They are discretely separate.

And now, in further exhibition of the fact that things so far alike as to appear of identical substance, may yet be discretely distinguished, as the leaf is distinguished from the branch; and, at the same time, to show what degrees are, in a kind of mirror or image, I will ask you to take a piece of common sewing cotton. You will find it, on examination, to be composed of a number of strands twisted together, so as to form one serviceable thread. Here are the strands, and there the thread :—



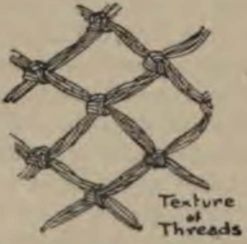
Strands.



Thread.

The strength and efficiency of the thread, as you must be aware, are not only greater than those of any single strand, even if it were thickened to the proportions of the thread, or than all the strands laid side by side, but they constitute another thing. The twist is a device by which each strand becomes present in every part and active at every point of the whole. The thread has not been produced from its component parts by continuity. It may appear as a continuous production, but it is continuous only in the sense in which creation is a continuous work, through discrete degrees. The thread is composed of the same substance throughout, but its parts are not merely so many strands. The strands form one part, and their twisting together form another. And because of the peculiar relation produced by the twist, between strand and strand, and between strands and thread, to strain the thread by drawing it tightly between the hands is not merely to extend them all in a given direction, but to increase the push or the embrace that each gives to its neighbour at every point of contact. The immediate purpose or function of each of the component strands is fulfilled in such circumstances of strain, not by any regard to the purpose of the strain, but by lending its support and strength to all the rest. The immediate purpose of the thread may be to form a stitch, say to pull together a rent, or to sew a button on a garment; the strands of which it is composed—assuming them, for the moment, to be intelligent—would not consider this any business of their's, but only that of sharing the strain, and tightening their hold upon one another while the thread attended, as it were independently, to its own business.

Assuming this to be clear, another step remains to be taken in carrying the thought from the thread to some piece of needlework composed entirely of such threads. This may be represented here in the form of a net.



A useful texture or web has been produced by means of crossings, interlacings, and knottings of the cotton. In the design thus formed we may recognise quite a new idea and purpose, a distinct form of use, which is neither an extension of the thread nor of the strands. It is not continuous with either of these. The substance, as it happens, remains the same, and there is an evident homogeneity in it all. But the design is assuredly not a mere matter of more cotton, and the use is no mere multiplication of threads. To add to these things indefinitely would not furnish the least iota either of the pattern or of the purpose. It would only make more of what was there in the first place; there would be added degrees of the matter used in construction, but nothing more.

The fact is that between the needlework and the thread there exists a true interval—a chasm that no matter can bridge. They are separated in their relation as the thread is separated from its strands; separated in their conception and essential being, even while they may be identified in their material substance. What is this mysterious, invisible, and yet, to the intelligent mind, perfectly clear interval? It is so simple, and yet so difficult to describe? Swedenborg brings to it the cryptic word "discrete," and we are fain to adopt his term, having nothing better to put in its place, and finding, the more we study it, the less reason to question its appropriateness.

The illustration which has just been submitted may be regarded as open to some objection on account of its very material and even artificial character. We have been looking at discrete degrees as they are imaged in the work of man's hands. And yet we were reminded previously of the necessity of keeping the living form in mind. A thread, it may be urged, has no life: and neither has a piece of needlework. But the muscle of my arm, we say, is alive. It lives as I live, that is, by the reception of life. It is not an artificial thing. As a matter of fact, the arm has no more life of its own than the cotton has. The life it has is not it. Neither is the life, the force exercised by the muscle. The life is one thing; the muscle, a second thing; and the force it exercises, a third. One proceeds from the other and all appear as one in the effect, but yet they are discretely separate. Now this piece of living flesh, which is the work of the Divine fingers, if we could dissect it would show us practically the same threefold composition and arrangement as in the needlework, only with incomparably greater refinement and beauty of detail. The muscle is composed of fibres beautifully interlaced, one with the other, as the needlework is composed of threads that cross and re-cross. Each fibre in the muscle is composed of fibrils embracing one another, as the thread is composed of strands twisted together. And these fibrils, almost inconceivably fine, make their way through every part of the composite we call the muscle, so as to be present in, and active at, every point, from the centre to the circumference. They constitute the substance of the muscle, and form it, not by mere extensions of themselves, but by the mysterious process of interweavings from which a new and distinct form of use is born. The fibres, cause the muscle, but they are not it. The fibrils are responsible for the production of the fibres, but they are not themselves fibres. They are distinct, both in their form and use. There is no question of similiarity between them. Each has its own function to fulfil; it operates according to the conditions of its own being; it occupies its own plane, and attends immediately to its own business. But together they form a homogeneous and harmonious whole.

Swedenborg writes :—

"It is known from ocular experience that every muscle in the human body consists of minute fibres, and these put together into little bundles form larger fibres, called motor fibres, and groups of these form a compound called a muscle. It is the same with nerves; in these from minute fibres larger fibres are compacted, which appear as filaments, and these grouped together compose the nerve. The same is true of the rest of the combinations, bundles and groupings out of which the organs and viscera are made up; for these are compositions of fibres and vessels variously put together, according to like degrees. It is the same also with each and everything of the vegetable and mineral kingdoms. In woods there are combinations of filaments in threefold order. In metals and stones there are groupings of parts, also in threefold order. From all this the nature of discrete degrees can be seen, namely, that one is from the other, and through the second there is a third, which is called the composite; and that each degree is discreted from the others."—D.L.W., 190.

From all this, moreover, the order of the creation of these things appears as a continuous work proceeding through discrete degrees by influx into ultimates, each step representing a distinct outgoing of life from the centre, and constituting in itself a complete attainment, having its own prescribed business and boundaries, which are the limitations of its capacity. Each in its order is the appointed stride of the moving thing. Here is to be seen the invariable pathway of the stepper in his steps. Such things, we may be sure, do not get out of line; for the law of procedure is unalterable.

And there is a point which comes into prominence more and more as we leave behind us the thought of material things which are in themselves superficial, and in which discrete degrees are to be seen only "as in a glass darkly." We are apt to think of the final product as representing the all-important stage. We think of the needlework as more than the thread, and the thread as more than the strand. So, also, with the muscle and the nerve, and the various organs and viscera of the body. In each case we see the whole as manifestly greater than its parts. So, also, with the wood and the stone. And there is a sense in which this is perfectly right. For all that precedes is comprehended and enters into its fulness and power in the concluding stage, which is the very end and aim of its proceeding. And yet does it not remain to be admitted that it is from the interpenetration of those first things in the final that the final has all its stability and power? If the strands were withdrawn from the thread, or the thread from the texture, would there be any needlework left? If the fibrils were withdrawn from the fibres, or the fibres from the muscle, would there be any arm? Surely, it would collapse and disappear before our eyes. The first things are before the last, not merely in time and order of production, but also in their vitality. They are the first receivers and the transmitters of life. The muscle continues to be a living thing in consequence of its continuing to derive life from those fine constituents which are as the channels of its influx. The fibrils are alive on a plane of reception far removed from the circumference on which the business of the muscle is carried on. They are immeasurably nearer to life itself.

So we find it stated among the universal principles of our philosophy that "the first degree is the all in everything of the subsequent degrees. . . . The first through . . . . groupings produces the second, and through it the third, and discretes each from the other, by drawing an envelope round it."

II

INFLUX

INFLUX

I HAVE spoken of the Doctrine of Degrees as affording us a philosophy of creation, and a complete science of relations. It is, indeed, more than that. For it equips the student, as I am persuaded no other study can equip him, for correct thinking on all matters of human interest.

We have prepared to some extent the way of our thinking with respect to what degrees are. We have considered them abstractly, and have seen them represented, more or less clearly, in concrete forms. We have recognised their presence not only in the objects of the natural world, but, as they may be shown, as in an image, even in the work of man's hands. And now we come to the second division of our subject, expressed by the term, "Influx."

In dealing with Degrees we found it necessary to discriminate carefully between the two kinds known in New Church terminology (which, by the way, we remember as the only terminology, at present, that makes any consistent attempt to give expression to these matters) as *Continuous* and *Discrete*. Continuous degrees are those of more or less of the same thing. Discrete degrees are those involved in the vital relations of cause and effect. In considering the question of Influx it is especially necessary to bear in mind what we have learned of the degrees that are discrete. Influx is concerned with the relation and communication between causes and effects. It is, in fact, the very relation and the communication itself. It is the bond, and the passage, or the means of the intercourse that takes place between the two. If there were no influx there would be no communication, no power to produce, no capacity to receive, and, therefore, no such thing as is implied in the word, Cause.

When it is said that Influx is concerned with the relation existing between cause and effect, and that it is, in a sense, the very relation itself, we are not to suppose that it has nothing to do with the relations of more or less of the same thing. For all increasings or developments on the same plane, whether of matter or spirit, are also determined by and dependent upon influx. The point is that the operation of influx is, in the first place, and all along the line, through discrete degrees into continuous degrees; that is, from the plane of causes into the plane of effects, by what might be described as a process of induction.

In considering the word, Influx, I propose to follow lines similar to those already adopted in connection with the word degree, with a view to establishing a link in our minds between the common and the special, the well-known and the little-known, and of connecting our technical terms as closely as possible with those in common use in the world, not only that we may see where they agree, but also that we may appreciate the precise nature and value of their difference.

"Influx," as we find it in the dictionary, is simply a Latin word signifying a flowing, or running into. "Inflow" would, of course, be its most obvious equivalent. Possibly the word "influence" might be preferred. Either would be a softer and pleasanter word in our ears, perhaps, and would certainly be more easily understood. Why, then, it might very reasonably be asked, do we not adopt one or other in place of the harsher and more difficult term?

The answer to this question is that the idea conveyed would then be that of a thing which need hardly give the mind a moment's pause. Its simplicity would be misleading. It would give a wrong impression, and a wrong impression is a much more dangerous and difficult thing to deal with than no impression at all. It is safer not to be understood in what one has to say, than to be misunderstood.

Apparently, even the compilers of the dictionary saw that there was more in the word influx than the simplicity of inflow would cover, and so we find the alternative renderings of "infusion" and "importation" offered by way of supplement. Now these alternatives are exceedingly interesting and suggestive words, and I feel sure it will repay us to give some attention to them.

To *flow* is to move softly and smoothly, as water or other liquid moves; travelling continuously from a source in one general direction; going, but not returning. So we think of the flow of the tide, as distinguished from its ebb. So also we speak of the flow of thought, and speech. It is essentially a movement, onward and outward, without intermission. But the flow of a stream implies something more than the mere movement. There must be the spring from whence it flows, and the basin into which it flows. There must also be the body of the water.

We may pause here a moment that we may register this as a provisional conclusion as to what is involved in influx. Influx is a movement of a distinct and definite character, having certain inevitable associations. It has source, substance, direction, and reception. So much may be learned from the simple term, inflow.

Now, in the word "infusion" we are carried a step forward, in what we may see to be quite the right direction. It certainly adds something to the conception. Taken simply it is a *pouring into*. In the familiar instance of the infusing of tea, by the pouring in of boiling water, we recognise, however, a second operation. There is a process of conjunction, a melting and mingling of parts, a blending of the two elements, water and the juice of the tea-leaf. Strictly speaking, the fusion of the two is only apparent, for, notwithstanding the effectiveness and popularity of the conjunction, each element remains just what it was. The water is still water, and the tea is tea. Nevertheless, the idea of the union belongs to the term.

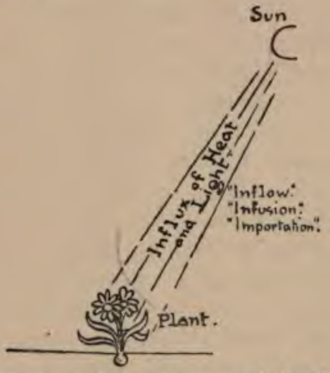
Infusion suggests, even more emphatically than inflow, the concrete circumstances of all existence. As soon as we entertain the thought of a pouring in, and a conjunction, we have not only all that inflow implies, but, very insistently, the two substances that have been brought together.

A second provisional conclusion may now be registered with respect to influx. It must involve conjunction.

"Importation," the third of our dictionary equivalents, carries us still further on our way. It signifies a *bringing into*. It suggests at once something carried and communicated. When goods are brought in from one country to another they are spoken of as "imports." Imports are things produced in the country from whence they are brought, to be consumed or used in the country to which they are carried. Importation therefore implies an intercourse or commerce taking place between producer and consumer, one bestowing and the other receiving, one benefitting and the other being benefitted; something passing from one to the other.

Let us now take these three ideas into our common understanding of what influx is: First, it is that of a continuous movement, proceeding definitely from a recognised source to a recognised end, and involving all the circumstances of a concrete existence. Second, it is that of a reception and conjunction. And, third, it is that of a definite and well-recognised relation between producer and consumer. All these things must enter into our application of the technical term; and there can be no true simplifying of that term if these are left out of the reckoning.

The process may be seen illustrated in the influx of heat and light into vegetation.



Influx claims our interest especially because it expresses the method by which we receive and exercise life.

Our bodies live by influx from the soul, and from the spiritual world; the soul lives by influx from heaven and the Lord. To know influx we must know something about the soul and its distinctiveness from the body.

Swedenborg says:—

"Nothing whatever can be known or even thought about influx, and about the intercourse of the soul with the body unless it is known what the soul is and also something of its nature . . . for how can the communication of two parts be thought of in the total absence of knowledge about the nature of one of them?" A.., 6,053.

Swedenborg, we observe, does not set out to make the matter seem perfectly easy, but almost to go out of his way to provide against any misunderstanding or any deceptive appearance of simplicity, by reminding us of the stupendous things in the depths and the heights which are involved. We cannot really know what influx is, or even think about it, unless we know what the soul is. And the particular knowledge of the soul to which he here refers is that of the fact that it is not "an æriel thing," or a "purely thinking entity," or a "vital force," or a "natural activity"; and not anything that may be located and confined in any one part or organ of the body. It is nothing less than "the man himself, who lives within the body, that is, the interior man who in this world acts through the body, and who causes it to live. This man, when loosed from the body, is called a spirit, and then appears in a complete human form." A.C., 6,954.

Influx, then, according to this statement, is especially concerned with the intercourse between the soul and the body; not merely the body of flesh, through which the soul acts in this world, but also with that spiritual body in which it will appear, and through which it will act, in the spiritual world. It is the intercourse that must continually take place between the interior form and the exterior form of a man wherever he may be situated. "The intercourse of the soul with the body," we are assured, is "the communication of spiritual things, which are of heaven, with natural things, which are of the world." A.C., 6,057.

Of this intercourse, it may be said, first, that it is of the nature of a continuous movement, proceeding from a recognised and efficient source, to a definite end; thus that it is an *inflow*; second, that it involves a reception and a conjunction; and is a kind of *infusion;* and third, that it is from the plane of the producer to that of the consumer; a perpetual commerce between the two; and is, therefore, an *importation.*

Familiar instances of influx, as the operation of spiritual things into natural, or of the soul into the body, may be pointed to just here in the play of facial expression, as, the smile, the frown, the appealing eye, the signs of melting tenderness; also, in tone, speech, and writing.

But in order that we may be brought to understand more clearly what influx is, and involves, in this special sense, we may very helpfully examine it in its more general applications. For its scope is nothing less than universal. There is no exception to the principle that all things exist and are maintained through or by means of influx.

The word is used, as we have seen, to express the communications that take place between all the planes of creation, spiritual and natural, and all spheres of life in their order, that is, the order of degrees.

It is especially to be known and remembered in all our thinking that nothing in the whole range of nature, and nothing in all the wide realms of life, from the least living of its phenomena, the inert stone, the dust of the ground, up through the countless organised forms that constitute the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, even to man himself, the crown of creation, in whom all the kingdoms unite, can be, or exist, for one moment in and from itself.

The law of all existence is that things proceed and are maintained from things prior to themselves. These prior existences are not to be thought of merely as prior with respect to time. To say that all existence is from something that goes before means much more than those merely natural sequences and superficial facts, everywhere seen and acknowledged, such as that there is no summer without a preceding spring, and no plant without a seed, and no fruit without a blossom, and no child without a parent. It does not mean that the world was called into existence at some remote time in the past, and that the beginnings of things were then made, while the things of to-day are simply developments and derivations of those primeval products. That, of course, would be the doctrine of evolution as commonly held and taught.

That there is such a time order of sequences in the world of nature no observant person can deny. In every kind of growth, one part, or one form, unquestionably makes its appearance, according to an invariable order, before another, and is even seen to pass on its substance to the production and building-up of its successor. The seed gives up to the plant, and the flower to the fruit. These are easily demonstrable successions along the line of time. They are full of interest and significance for us. But if this were all that was intended by the statement with respect to thing prior we should have to amend its form, and to acknowledge that all these things enjoy in the present an independent existence; as a son may be said to exist independently of his father, or as the heir to a title, office, or estate, may be thought of as entering in due course into the dignities, emoluments, and privileges of the position without need of further assistance from those who have previously held it.

And having made such a declaration we should have expressed the popular view with respect to what is prior on the same plane, and indicated the line along which the superficial mind of the world is accustomed to look for its origins. It would be a commonplace of purely natural philosophy.

Now, the point of distinction between this natural philosophy; this quite superficial and materialistic investigation into causes, from which the materialist's theory of evolution has been derived, and the spiritual philosophy which penetrates below the surface and affords us our doctrine of influx, begins to be realised as we dismiss the thought of the past from our minds, and confine ourselves to the contemplation of the living and eternal Now. The point from which we are required to set out in our spiritual investigation is that, however much things may appear to come from the past and however clear the line of the succession may seem in that direction, the time plane is not the plane of origins, or of causes, but only of effects. Things have their true beginnings in that which is prior to time. Every leaf upon the tree, every green blade of grass and flower of the field which we see springing up to-day is as freshly made, as immediately born, and as directly proceeding from the hand of the ever-present and ever-active Creator as when, the earth being, as we are told, "without form and void, and darkness upon the face of the deep, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said . . . 'Let the earth bring forth!'" All these things are the effects of influx, that is, of the operation of life itself, beginning from the all-originating Centre, and proceeding thence by distinct stages, through a series of created and recipient forms, or planes, each separated from the other by a discrete degree, until it reaches the circumference, which is the plane of time and space, and on which it comes to rest.

Even the inert stone, seemingly independent of any kind of vitalising and sustaining source, is no less a subject of influx; a recipient of life in its degree. It is not alive as the world reckons life, but it is a recipient of life; it is what it is because of what it receives. It subsists from what is prior, from that which precedes it, not in time, but in the scale or order of creation, which is from within outwards; it is the heir in a direct line of all the planes that lie between it and the great first Cause. There is an immediate correspondence and a conjunction between it and the next succeeding plane by an importation travelling along the line that leads from the centre. This is the line of its production, and of its maintenance. It derives its abiding properties by open transit along that line. If anyone of the intervening planes were to be cut off, the stone would cease.

So would the flower, the fruit, the seed; each is to be regarded as the immediate outcome of a spiritual or more living something which precedes it, something nearer to the all-sustaining Source, not in the line of matter, and not in the line of time.

I pluck a piece of apple-blossom from the bough. It is a lovely thing; all sweetness of odour, colour, and form; a thing of life; giving promise of more to come. But soon it will die in my hand. The blossom will not now lead to fruit. I have brought it to an untimely end. Why? Because I have severed it from the bough. I have taken it out of its appointed place in the plane of reception to which it belongs. We hear the echo of the words, "*A branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine.*" Exactly so! But not because the vine as a natural object—the bough from which I have plucked the blossom—had any life of its own to communicate. The bough depends upon the tree. Is the tree more living than it? The tree depends upon the ground. Is the ground more living than the tree? The fact is, that no one of these things is more living, or less living, or any otherwise living, than another. Each is dependent directly upon the influx of life, from that which is next to it in the order of its creation; from that spiritual world, which is prior to the plane of nature on which it exists, and to which it belongs. Because I separate the growing branch from its appointed place in the circle of the life forms of the tree, I remove it from the immediate sphere and order of its influx, from spiritual things into natural. It can proceed no further in the direction of the fulfilment of its use, because of its dependence on what is prior in the order of life. It dies.

What we have before our eyes from day to day in the plane of nature is the outermost sphere of life, the circumference only of a globe, which is sustained from within by circles within circles of life-forms, gradually receding from the circumference, each circle, as it approaches to the centre, becoming more manifestly a pulsating sphere of energy, more intensely and completely vitalised, more perfectly responsive to the influx of what is prior to itself. Whether we regard it as from without, looking inwards; or from beneath, upwards, the result is the same.

Some years ago, when living in Australia, I found myself much impressed by what seemed a curious effect in nature—curious, because, to me, unaccustomed—resulting from the clearness of the atmosphere in that favoured land. It is an atmosphere, as you are no doubt aware, almost ideally free from the impurities and vapours which obstruct our northern view of the starry firmament. Here we are accustomed to the appearance of the sky at midnight as a kind of flat, black curtain or background, spread out and embossed or embroidered by a pattern—a flat pattern of stars. The effect of the clearer atmosphere of the southern hemisphere is to exhibit the sky as a great vault; to give the clear impression of space endlessly receding; of star behind star, occupying plane beyond plane, some nearer, some more remote; but all suspended in space, and visibly surrounded by it—a stereoscopic effect, in short.

It gave me a new view and impression of the sky. I had known all this before as a matter of theory, and now I saw it as a matter of fact. And it seems to me now that what the Australian atmosphere did for my natural eyes with respect to the starry firmament the Doctrine of Influx does, or is capable of doing, for the eyes of the mind, as they yield themselves to the contemplation of the outspread curtain of nature. It produces in it the effect of a transparency and an inexhaustible depth. One seems to get from it the inside view of the universe, and to lose entirely the sense of a flat surface, or a single plane.

Everything in the field of vision becomes henceforth a thing of life. There is no obstruction anywhere, because there is no independent speck of dust within its borders. All is ordered, determined, vitalised, and rendered transparent by influx, proceeding from the central Sun of the Heavens, the innermost of the spheres, the one only self-existent Cause, the God of the whole earth!

"It is a universal rule that nothing can subsist from itself, but from and through something else, consequently that nothing can be kept in form except from and through something else, which may also be seen from everything in nature. The case is the same with man. In respect to his external, man cannot subsist except from and through heaven. And neither can heaven subsist from itself, but only from the Lord, who alone subsists from Himself." A.C., 6,056.

He is present thus, in the whole of His universe, from first things even to last.

There is a word we have heard very frequently of late, and which touches upon the question of the way in which the Lord God is present in the things of His creation. It is the word Immanence. Modern theology has much to say about Divine Immanence. Immanence means not only being *with* a thing but *in* it. One who stands alongside of, or in the same room with us, is said to be present. And whatever is visible to our eyes, even though it be at a distance, is said to be present to view. But the immanent presence of God means not merely that He is alongside of, or with us in the same place, or visible to our eyes at a distance; but that He is actually within us, and everything he has made. Immanence is *that which remains in.* How are we to distinguish this from mere Panthesism?—the identification of God and nature. How should we think of God as being in and yet distinct from, His creation? He is within the apple-tree. You look up into its canopy of leaf and blossom, and you say, "Yes, surely, there is something of the Creator Himself visibly present here. This is a living thing, and there is but one life. He is immanent in it all!"

But God is not the tree; neither is the tree God. It is not even a part of Him. They are not to be identified in any way. How can He be in it, as its very life, and yet not it?

Do you know how a feeling can get into a thought so as to be, in a sense, one with it, and yet be distinct? Do you know how the same feeling can get into the muscles of your face, and be actually present there—visbly present—so that you could not separate them and say, This is the face, and that the feeling! And yet you know they are utterly distinct? Do you know how the thought can get into the tongue so as to give it the power of utterance—to be as the very thought itself speaking in our ears, apparently inseparable, and yet absolutely different? So the Divine is in me and you, yet we are not God. He is with us and in us, the life of our life, the substance of our substance, the bone of our bone, and the flesh of our flesh, and yet distinctly apart from us.

We may use a familiar illustration here. Let us look into a very transparent image, a natural mirror. If we think of the sun it will help us to understand this somewhat difficult matter. The sun, we are told, is

91,000,000 of miles away from the earth. That is a very long way off. We do not need to be told that at such a distance the sun cannot possibly be the earth, nor the earth the sun. Nor could either be part of the other. They are as distinct as any two things could well be. And yet it is a fact of experience that the sun is actually present with us every day. It makes its presence felt continually in and upon everything that exists on the face of the whole earth. Nothing can, by any means, get away from it. It is all through this room. It gets into our eyes and ears. We touch it, and feel it. The air trembles with it. The earth throbs with it. The grass, and the tree, the bird, and the beast, and the man, all live and move, and have their earthly being in it. It makes the wind to blow, and the rain to fall. It drives our machinery. It gives us stores of forces to meet our needs. If it were not present, vegetation would cease; things could not continue to exist for a moment. They are all held together by its presence.

How does it do this? By a natural influx of energy, proceeding from it by discrete degrees. By an outflowing force which operates upon the sphere immediately surrounding it, moving it in turn to operate upon other spheres, and so, through the adapting and translating media of the earth's atmospheres, in which that energy is received, tempered and accommodated to its reception, the sun is here.

It is a picture of the way in which the Creator is present in the work of His hands, working from within outwards. As the sun is in Nature so, comparatively, is He in the things of the soul. So is He even in the sun itself, and in the tree, by the progressions of His influence, from sphere to sphere.

It may help us to think definitely of the peculiar operation of life expressed by the word influx, if we continue to look at it, comparatively, or, as it appears as in an image, in the sphere of nature; remembering always that what we are looking at is the comparison or image rather than the thing itself. For influx itself is the communication of spiritual things, which are of Heaven, with natural things, which are of earth. Paul says, "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." And Swedenborg tells us that "The objects of the natural world are like a mirror, which shadows forth the objects of the spiritual world." H.H. 56.

So again we read: "What is meant by spiritual influx cannot be better seen than by means of the natural influxes which take place and appear in this world; as by the influx of heat from the sun into all things of the earth, with all varieties in accordance with the seasons of the year and the climates of the earth; and by the influx of light into the same with all variety likewise in accordance with the times of the days, and also of the years; also in a varied manner according to the climates. From that influx of things into all things of the earth whence comes vegetative life; and from the influx of light . . . . whence comes support . . . . and colours . . . . in like manner of light into the eye . . . . of sound into the ear . . . . it may be comprehended what is the influx of life from the Lord, who is the Sun of Heaven . . . . Heavenly heat, which is love, produces that vital heat which is in man, and heavenly light, which is faith, produces his understanding." A.C. 6,190.

We must not, of course, lose sight of the fact that it is only in appearance that the sun of nature produces anything. On this point we read, "Speaking from appearances most men say that the sun by heat and light produces whatever is seen in plains, fields, gardens, and forests; also that the sun by its heat hatches worms from eggs. . . . Those who speak from appearances only may speak in this way, without ascribing these things to nature, because they are not thinking about the matter. . . . But those who confirm themselves in the idea . . . . end by ascribing all things to nature . . . . and become atheists." D. L. W., 340.

It is a matter of experience that there is what may be called a natural influx of light into the eye, and of sound into the ear. No one would think of identifying the eye with the light. The eye is universally recognised as a vessel, or organ, adapted to the reception of this particular influx. So with the ear, and all the rest of the sensories. They are receptacles. They are made to hold something, as a cup is made to hold liquid. They also exhibit the capacity to respond to a stimulus. They re-act, but do not otherwise act. So with the whole body. Wherever we examine it we find it a receptive and a reactive organ or agent. It is dependent in all its parts upon influx—particular and general—upon something that must be continually supplied to it. It is the recipient, on the one hand, of natural influxes, from the plane of nature, and, on the other, of spiritual influxes from the plane of life. It has the capacity to respond to each of those; but in no case may it respond to the natural influx, except by means of, or in obedience to, the disposing of the spiritual.

Strictly speaking, there is no natural influx at all. All true influx is from within outwards, and never from without inwards. It is the communication of the spiritual things which are of heaven, with the natural things which are of earth, the prior with the posterior, the internal of man with his external.

"It is, according to all appearance that the external senses, as the sight and hearing, flow into the thought and excite ideas there; for it appears that objects and also speech, move the senses, first the external and then the internal senses. But this appearance, however strong, is nevertheless a fallacy; for what is external, being gross and material, cannot flow into and move what is internal, which is pure and spiritual; this is contrary to nature. It is the internal sense, that is, the sense of the spirit itself, which sensates through the external sense, and disposes the external sensory to receive objects according to its dictates." A.C. 6,322.

But in every case the influx is determined as to its extent, quality, and character by the condition of the recipient vessel. It is always according to correspondence—a condition of agreement and common purpose between the producer and the consumer, the giver and the taker, the spiritual world and the natural. It can only come where there is a preparation and an adaptation, that it, a capacity to receive it.

The sensory of sight is an intermediate between two spheres, one natural and the other spiritual. It looks, as it were, to both. It is dependent upon each. Immediately adjacent or contiguous to it in the realm of matter—in a sense even continuous with it—is a palpitating, vibrating atmosphere, a sea of ether. This vibrant sphere is stirred into its peculiar condition of activity by an operation which is as a natural influx from the Sun. The eye is affected with sympathetic tremblings; not, however, because the ether has the least power to communicate its own motions to the eye, but because the eye is made sensible, by influx from that other sphere with which it is in communication, the spiritual sphere, which has the power to affect it. The eye is opened from within, and disposed to avail itself of the conditions of the ether pressing upon it from without. Here, then, is the prepared condition into which the power of sight may flow. It is not the eye that sees, but the mind that looks through the eye; and the mind looks through the eye, not directly, or continuously, as the eye itself might be supposed to look through a pane of glass, but discretely, by means of influx.

It looks through the eye, as it smiles through the face, or speaks through the tongue, or writes through the hand, that is, by an influx from itself into these organs.

Something from within, meeting something without, at the doorway of sense, and appropriating, or applying it there to its purposes; adaptation and correspondence on the part of each; a flowing into, and an apparent infusion of the two, an importation of energy from one to the other; this is sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell. These are simple things, in our experience, Are we making them difficult in our thoughts? Not so, if by such means we may come to understand them.

And all this that applies so manifestly to our physical senses, in communication with the mind, applies also to the mind itself—that is, to the very man himself—in his communication with the spiritual world, and with heaven, and through these with the Lord.

The mind itself is a plane—or, more correctly, a series of planes, natural, spiritual, and celestial—of reception; a prepared organ, with a capacity to respond to influx. It may re-act, but it cannot otherwise act. All its life of thought and feeling is derived. It has been formed and brought into existence for this very purpose. It is a compact of the faculties of the will and understanding. The will is affected, both directly and indirectly, from the Lord—directly, from

Himself; indirectly, through the heavens, by the media of angels and spirits.

The mind has its thinking inspired and modified through other minds influencing it in particular ways. No one really thinks from himself, but always from others. In a general way all thinking is from heaven; and all heaven thinks from the Lord. And there is no such thing anywhere, save only in the Lord Himself, as independent or original thought.

Nevertheless, it remains a fact that men are responsible for the character of their thoughts, as well as of their acts; for the influx takes on form and assumes character, according to the condition of the mind to which it comes. Influx is according to correspondence. Where there is no correspondence there is no influx. Reception depends on preparation and willingness to receive. The kind of thought that comes to my mind at any moment is determined by the kind of knowledge I have chosen to store my memory with, and according to what I have already favoured or believed to be true. The inflowing thought will take shape according to what it finds there. Beginning in the all-originating Divine Mind, as a pure and beneficient thing, it may find in me that which will change it into a thought of what is altogether impure and evil. But the power to think it is still from Him, by influx, both mediate and immediate. For influx never compels. It never commands. It disposes and inclines, but it respects freedom. It enables man to act as of himself. It becomes in him what he chooses to make of it. It is very humble. It puts on the clothing he provides.

The will, thus energised, acts by influx into thoughts, and these by influx into acts. So we find the influx which gives us Divine Immanence at work everywhere, taking upon itself the limitations and the qualities of each plane to which it comes; entering into its forms; adopting its speech; availing itself of its material; not passing through from one plane to another as water may pass through a channel, unaffected by the passage, but entering in and disposing things there, according to its reception; coming to a kind of termination; making the plane a field of operations, the basis and instrument of a new proceeding, in which it may meet the needs of the next in order; constituting each in turn the agent of its purpose, and causing all to work together in the fulfilment of the great design.

III

ULTIMATES

ULTIMATES

Some of the things I have now to bring before your attention with respect to Ultimates, have already been implied, or mentioned casually and in general terms, in connection with Influx and Degrees. It is necessary, however, that we should consider these things a little more directly and in greater detail, as well as in some aspects that have not yet been shown or touched upon.

We begin by recalling to our minds the definition of Ultimates, which was given in our last lecture, namely, the last or lowest of the planes of creation in which the operation of influx comes to an end, and from which a returning movement begins. That is a simple enough definition, so far as it goes, but we do not lose sight of the fact that it takes for granted a good deal; it assumes knowledge already present in the mind as to what degrees are, and what influx is, and those who do not know these things are not in a position to make much of the definition. The necessity, therefore, for gathering together our knowledge in order that we may add to it is obvious.

In the meantime, it may be useful to illustrate in two very simple ways something of what is involved in the definition, namely, the idea of an outgoing movement, coming to a last point in which it seems to expend itself, and yet to receive there a fresh impetus, a new access of energy, revealed in a returning movement from that point back to its beginning.

The first illustration is the very familiar one of a ball thrown against a wall from which it rebounds, and is caught again in the hand of the thrower. In the wall, which receives, checks, and translates the force of the first movement, we see a representation of the plane of ultimates; not by any means a complete representation, of course, but correct and suggestive so far as it goes. It is the last point in the outward journey, and from it the return begins.

The second illustration is not quite so familiar, but more instructive. It is the flight of the boomerang, the curved, wooden, war and hunting club of the Australian native. The boomerang is sent out from the hand of the practised thrower with a curious whirling movement, which checks itself at every turn and eventually comes to an end as an outward movement only to transfer itself at that point into an inward movement, by which it returns, like the ball, to the hand from which it issued. The whole course of the movement, in going and returning, may be thought of as a circle. The lowest point of the circle is the ultimate. One half is the going forth, and the other the coming back. This is a picture of creation.

All creation is effected, and all things in the created universe exist and are maintained, by means of a continual process of life from the Creator, the Self-existent Cause, Who is the Centre and the All in everything of the universe. This process consists of a series of movements or steps, each of which comes to a termination and forms a boundary, returning, as it were upon itself. So we may adopt another figure, and say that the way of creation is not a continuous line, but resembles rather a ladder. Each step of this ladder, by means of which life travels from heaven to earth, is a "discrete degree." The Doctrine of Degrees tells us what these steps are, and how they communicate with one another. It shows us that the communication is not affected by any mere extension of one into the other, but by influx, according to what we know as "correspondence;" that they communicate, in short, as cause communicates with its effect, as thought communicates with speech, or as the mind communicates with the face, when it causes it to look sad or to break out into a smile. It tells us that these successive steps, or planes, in the process of creation, if extended indefinitely, would never reach one another, any more than two parallel lines, however extended, could be made to meet. And it teaches us that there is a point at which this process of life comes to an end in its outward journey, a point beyond which it cannot go, a terminus, a last stage; and this last stage is the plane of ultimates. It is the furthest reach of the throw.

Now whether we say this process resembles a ladder, or, adopting yet another figure, declare that it resembles a series of concentric rings—a sphere composed of circles within circles, it means the same thing. We are simply making use of mechanical images for the purpose of suggesting spiritual processes. And there is a danger in doing this; the danger of our forming merely mechanical and lifeless conceptions, and failing to realise that what we are considering is of a purely spiritual and living character. And I do not know any better way of correcting our conceptions and avoiding the danger so far as the creation of the universe is concerned than by referring all that has been said to the mind, which is a universe in little, the micrososm, in which the whole matter remains to be seen. The mind resembles a ladder, because it is composed of steps or stages, such as we have already attributed to the process of life. It may be represented in this form, or in that of the series of concentric rings. Its life is like the ball and the boomerang; coming to an end and making it a new beginning, returning eventually to its own first principles. But there is nothing ''mechanical'' in the mind, either as to its form or its working. It is a thing of life. And we must also remember that when we speak of life, and its processes, we are speaking of that which exists only in subjects or things which are substances, and have forms. There is no abstract life.

I have spoken of degrees, hitherto, with little or no direct reference to their arrangement into groups of three, or what is known as their trinal form. I have been concerned chiefly to show the essential distinction between continuous and discrete degrees and between one degree and another, and the way in which one operates into another. I have shown the relation between discrete degrees to be that of cause and effect, involving an arrangement into pairs, the prior and the posterior, the spiritual and the natural. Now that we have come to the doctrine of ultimates, it is necessary that we should recognise that a more complex arrangement, the composite of three-in-one, or the trinity, is included in every form and every thing that exists. Swedenborg tells us that " in everything of which anything can be predicated, there is the trine which is called end, cause and effect, and these three are related to one another according to degrees of height."

Degrees of height, we remember, are discrete degrees, conceived of as forming a ladder, or a series of paralled lines, one above another.

We are familiar with the idea of cause and effect, in spiritual and natural things, and we experience no difficulty at all in recognising that one of these terms involves the other; that is to say, that a cause necessarily implies an effect, and an effect a cause. We accept this to begin with as an abstract conception, or as a matter of pure reason. When it is seen, or admitted as a postulate, however, that the plane of nature is a plane of concrete effects, we find, that a plane of active causes, corresponding to these, is assumed. For reason compels us to admit that the one implies, and actually involves, the other. The abstract idea becomes embodied in the concrete fact. Just as there is no such thing as a "mere effect," or an effect existing apart from a cause, so there can be no such thing as "mere nature," or a "merely natural world," or a "mere plane of effects," existing apart from the interior or prior plane which we call the spiritual world. So it follows that there is no such thing as a natural object existing by itself. One invariably means two.

The conclusion to which the mind is thus brought is a comparatively simple one. It requires no very special training or equipment of the mind to enable one to see it. The exercise of ordinary reason and common-sense is sufficient. The only point that would be at all likely to escape ordinary reason—which is apt to dwell on superficies rather than depth—is that effects not only indicate causes, but actually contain them. The two exist simultaneously together, as one. The effect is not only the outcome of the cause, but its clothing; the very body in which it dwells; just as the bodies in which we, as spiritual beings, now find ourselves clothed in this world are not only the outcome and expressions, or effects, of the spirit which gives them life, but actually contain that from which they come. Body and spirit exist simultaneously, acting harmoniously together as one, although they occupy planes that are absolutely distinct. At the point of the material body, the spirit touches nature, and finds in it a material habitation; and the door of this habitation is a door between two worlds.

Whatever can be said of the plane of effects, which is the world of ultimates, can be said of the body which belongs to that world, and whatever may be said of the body as the ultimate of the spirit may be said of every single thing in nature, as well as of nature as a whole. Nature, as a whole, is a body, the soul of which is the spiritual world. The objects of nature are bodies, the souls of which belong to, and actually form part of the spiritual world. The souls of these bodies even now interpenetrate them, as our souls interpenetrate our bodies, not as occupying space in so doing, for only the body can occupy the space, but apart from space, as my thought, at the present moment, is apart from space, even while it occupies the words I utter in your hearing, and occupies the atmosphere by which it is conveyed to your ears, or as it interpenetrates the tongue and the lips by which I utter the words. Nature, deprived of its soul which is its cause, would be as dead and profitless, as incapable of production, as this tongue and these lips must be when the soul is withdrawn from them at death.

The understanding of all this, I say, is comparatively simple. To a New Church audience it may seem as the very A B C of our philosophy. Now we go a step further, and ask ourselves, What is this third factor, or element, in things which constitutes them three-in-one, both singly and collectively? What is it that Swedenborg calls the "end"?

We remember, of couse, that we have already used this word in speaking of ultimates, as the point at which the process of life comes to an end in its outward journey.

An "end," according to common speech, is the extreme point, the very last thing of all. When we speak of things coming to an end, we generally mean something in the way of a full stop. The thing that ceases to exist is at an end. An obstruction to a movement brings it to a stop; that is its end, we say.

Death is the end of life. Decay is the end of growth. The night is the end of the day. Darkness puts an end to light. Presently this lecture will come to an end. But we also speak of the end we have in view in following a certain course, and by that we are understood to mean not necessarily anything of the nature of a stop, but an object aimed at, a purpose to be attained; the purpose itself may be endless. While it is scarcely necessary to say here that the first of these two senses, in which we are acustomed to use the word, the sense of cessation, does not enter at all into Swedenborg's use of it, so far as this subject of degrees in trinal form is concerned, it may be necessary to show that the second sense, that of a purpose contemplated, enters into it, and belongs entirely to it, and yet does not cover the whole ground. For we have to note the fact that it is the first degree, or step, in the trine, which is distinguished as the end; and that is the point we should be more likely to speak of as the beginning.

And we should be perfectly right in doing so. For it is the point of the beginning of everything. In the three-fold form of end, cause, and effect, we have a first, a middle, and a last. But Swedenborg is so particular to use this word end, in preference to beginning, and so confident of its fitness, that he actually extends it to the two other degrees or steps, and speaks of the "first end," the "middle end," and the "last end." His preference for the word leads us to suspect that there is something in it which the other terms do not so well convey. And this we find to be the case.

Even when we speak of our having an "end in view," we are unconsciously asserting the point from which we set out to attain the end. It is one of the paradoxes in which we find the larger expression of the truth. We speak of that which, if it is indeed our "end," both was and is the first thing in all our thought, and the true beginning of the course we are pursuing. The end I have in view, for example, in giving these lectures is, let us say, to convey to other minds a clear understanding with respect to the doctrine of degrees. It was from that end I set out. It was present in my mind at the beginning, before a word of the first lecture of the series was written. It was present in the first sentence I addressed to you. It has been present with me up to this moment. It has been the inmost, of every word I have spoken, and every illustration I have used, and every diagram I have exhibited. I have done nothing without it.

Now, if I were to call this "end" the "beginning," while it would be a perfectly correct description, so far as it went, it would not be a full description, and would not convey the idea with anything like the clearness of the other. For the beginning would almost certainly suggest either the first word of the first sentence, or the first step actually taken in pursuance of the end, and not anything in the present moment. That is to say, it would not convey the idea of a true beginning at all.

Still less would it suggest the thing that continues to be the beginning all along the line. The true beginning is now; in the word of the moment; as much as in any previous word. It is here, so long as I keep the " end " in view.

What we are to understand therefore by the " end," which is the first degree in the trinity, existing in the things of nature, and also in the human mind, is the conception of the thing which includes in its view, not only the object to be attained, but all the means whereby it is to be attained; which sees beforehand the steps to be taken, and which actually goes out on the way it has foreseen, and embodies itself in the means, as well as in the final attainment. And because it does this it is permissible not only to speak of it as the first end, but of the means as the second end, and the effect as the third, or last end, because the very end itself, the end in view, is in each and all of them. So the first end of my lecture is the inspiring purpose, the second end—the thing that is to cause or bring to pass that purpose—is the lecture itself, and the third end is the fulfilment of the purpose—the effect—in the minds of my hearers.

Or, if we say that the end in view is simply to produce the lecture, apart from any effect it may have on others, we still have the trine of end, cause, and effect, for the purpose of producing the lecture would be the first end, the mental effort involved, and the material employed, would be the cause or the second end, and the lecture itself the effect, or third end.

This, of course, applies equally to every form of human industry. Nothing can be produced which is not three-in-one.

And, again, I have to draw your attention to the fact that this is not merely the idea of a succession of stages in the line of time. It is not merely the recognition of a certain order of production. It includes that, but it is more. We all know quite well that before we can even think about a thing we must first have some feeling, or desire with regard to it—a previous stage of experience—something from which the thinking may be said to come. You think, let us say, of eating; the thought comes most likely from a sense of hunger—from appetite. You think of writing a letter; the thought comes from a sense of the need of communication; you have received a letter perhaps and you feel called upon to answer it. The sense or the feeling comes first, and after that the thought. And we know that each of these steps must be taken before any action can follow. If one has no thought of eating, the probability is that one will not eat. If one does not think of writing, the letter quite certainly will not be written. It will not write itself. Only the thought will produce the effect. These are the invariable steps or stages in the process of the thing.

But it would be quite possible for us to see and admit all this, without realising that the stages exist simultaneously, and are altogether present in the third or ultimate degree; that they are all included in the effect; and that it is because of this inclusion that things have a three-fold form. One thing means not only a second thing within it, but also a third thing within the second. It is a trine, and if it were not a trine it could not exist at all!

I have spoken thus at some length of the trinal form, and particularly of the end which is the first degree of the trine, in order that we may know what ends are, and because it is only from a knowledge of ends that we may come to know what ultimates are; for ultimates are third or last ends. They constitute the lowest extremes in the order of creation; the extremes in which the operation of influx comes to an end, and from which a reaction, or returning movement commences. In other words, ultimates are effects, involving and containing all that has gone before, and affording a basis and support for new beginnings. In ultimates the spiritual things of heaven are received, clothed, fixed, and rendered imperishable. In ultimates they produce their effects; and in effects they exist in their fulness and power. In such fulness of power spiritual things are as seeds for their own multiplication. Apart from the effects, which are ultimates, spiritual things would be like a house without a foundation, or like a tree without a root.

"Interior things," we read, "are terminated and bounded in the ultimates of order, and are altogether there, and dwell together there as in one house."

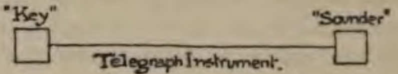
Again, they are "like wine in a cask, or like furniture in a house." And, again, like the thousand motor fibres which concur and are present in each movement of the arms and hands and the thousands of things of thought and affection which excite the motor fibres and are present in them.

And of the effect we are told that it is " nothing else than the end in its outmost."

Ultimates, in themselves, are dead, but they have power from the things that are in them, which are alive as words have power from the thoughts they clothe and express. Where there is no expression there is no power; all expression is in ultimates, and to ultimates power is given. The emotion that does not find its way into a definite thought perishes; the thought that does not issue either in word or deed is dissipated. The letter of the Divine Word has power from the things that are contained in it. Without the letter it would have no power for it would have no foundation on which to stand, no house in which to live, no skin to bound it and hold it together. It must perish, just as a fruit must perish without the rind that bounds it, gives it protection, and preserves all its juices.

The term, "ultimate," is from the Latin *ultimus,* signifying the furthest, or the most distant point. It expresses the extreme of anything, the line drawn beyond which there is no going; as an *ultimatum* is the last word spoken, or the final offer made, in a treaty, the *ultima,* the last syllable in a word, and the *Ultima Thule,* the furthest point of land.

All influx proceeds from ends to ultimates. The course of influx, with its beginning and its termination, may be represented in the simplest possible way by means of a line. A line has two ends, and these are connected by a middle. We extend this first simple idea in the form of a telegraph instrument, which consists of what is called the "key," for transmitting messages, and the "sounder," for receiving them.



The wire stretches between. The sounder, which receives and responds to the message from the key, and makes intelligible to the senses of sight and hearing the otherwise unintelligible motions of the wire; giving these, as it were, a body of their own to live in, is clearly in the position of the ultimate. It belongs to effects. The key from which the message is sent is no less clearly in the position of the producer, or the "first end," and the wire takes the place of the "cause," which is the "middle end," and the very means of transmission. Here we have what may serve as a helpful illustration of the trine which is to be recognised. Nature itself—including of course the human material body, with all its equipment and efficiency for action, we will take as the sounder of the great telegraph instrument of creation. It is one end of the line—the last end. At the other end we have the Spiritual Sun, which is the key of the instrument, from which all the messages of life are sent out. The Spiritual Sun is the first emanation of the Divine, the sphere encompassing the Lord, the Creator. It is the point from which He communicates with the whole universe. In it all the Divine currents—the creating and sustaining energies of life—have their beginning. It is to it we must look for all our origins. The Operator is there at work. And the wires are never at rest; for His messages are unceasing. Between these two points—the "key" of the Spiritual Sun, and the "sounder" of nature, there stretches the spiritual world. There, let us say, is the wire that forms the connections. And the messages that travel along the wire are terminated, bounded and fixed for us in trees and grass, sunshine and rain, flowers and birds and beasts and men.

So again, by means of a merely mechanical illustration, we may gather, if we are willing, some clearer idea of the great unity we are considering, the trine that is before our eyes in the wide world of ultimates, the familiar plane of nature, with its threefold envelope of atmospheres, aura, ether, and air; its composite substance of earth, air and water; its three kingdoms, mineral, vegetable, and animal; its dimensions of length, breadth, and thickness; its composites, also, of stones and metals and woods, fruits and seeds, stems and leaves, muscle and artery, nerve and sinew, bone and skin; and all things of human production, displaying in their construction and development, the invariable form of existence, even in externals, and presenting there an image of the discreted planes and threefold order of the mighty whole.

And now, I think, we may usefully extend, and perhaps amend our figure of mechanism, illustrating spiritual and Divine things. I want you still to think of the telegraph instrument, but instead of regarding nature as the "sounder," or the "last end," we will take it as part of the intermediate; and man himself, or the nature-plane of the human mind, as the ultimate thing—which it really is.

It is true that in nature we see things in their lowest or last forms, as a wall beyond which there is no passing; and that all its forms are connected with and maintained from the spiritual world. But it is a characteristic of matter that there is no permanence in it. Apparently the most substantial and enduring of things, it is discovered to be the least enduring. The somewhat sorrowful admission we have all sooner or later to make is that "nothing in this world can last." The ultimates of matter are temporary ultimates. They serve a use and pass away. And the use they serve is to form an abiding plane of true ultimates in the mind; to provide in it a "last end" in which the messages from the Great Operator may be received, terminated, bounded and fixed, for ever. This is the great reason why we are born into the natural world and not directly into the spiritual.

This abiding and indispensable plane is produced in the natural memory. It is there that natural things—the forms and qualities, attractions and relations, of natural objects—find permanence. The objects themselves come and go; they are produced and reproduced, born, developed, decline and die. They are passing things. They are susceptible to the influx of life only for a time. They are not made to endure. But all the time they are coming and going, coming and going, there is something at work upon them. Minds, in number as the sands upon the seashore, are occupied in taking their impressions, by mental photography, dissection, analyses, comparisons; noting, with more or less care, their various characteristics. And the knowledge thus gained, the impressions and conclusions, and ideas thus extracted from them, form vessels of spiritual reception in the mind. They clothe the mind and bound it, and give it place and standing in the universe of life. Two miracles are wrought in it. First, the things of the natural world are made permanent in the mind; they acquire there a fixity which in themselves they do not possess. For every impression made in the memory is a permanent thing. It is not lost, however we may seem to forget it. Are we not continually having evidence of this in the way in which, as we say, things are "brought back" to our minds by some association of circumstances, even long after their occurrence? The temporary plane of ultimates—which is the plane of matter—is the means whereby the permanent plane of the natural memory may be formed. And the second miracle is that in this way the mind itself acquires form and permanence. Without it there would be no vessels into which the spiritual things of heaven could flow.

These natural things are taken with us when we leave this world. They form what Swedenborg speaks of as "the cutaneous covering of the spiritual body, taken from the natural world." He also tells us that "the natural memory serves as a plane or foundation, in which the ideas of the thoughts of spirits and angels are terminated."

"All who die in adult age have with them a plane of life acquired from the terrestrial and material world. This plane consists of their memory and its corporeal natural affections. This plane after death is fixed, and remains quiescent, but it still serves as an ultimate plane for the thought, for thought flows into it. Infants who have died such and have been educated in heaven have not such a plane, but instead of it they have a spiritual natural one, because they derive nothing from the material world and the terrestrial body—they derive all from heaven." H.H. 345.

This idea of a plane in which thoughts are terminated, but which in itself is quiescent, may be understood when we reflect upon what is involved in the exercise of memory in this world. If I speak to you now of the characteristics or the significance of the vegetable kingdom, or if, as in the illustration of the oak-leaf proceeding from its stem, which I offered in my first lecture, I make a symbolic or conventional drawing of a natural object, a tree or flower, I am appealing by its means to a plane of memory-knowledge in you which has been formed by some experience of vegetation. It is not necessary that a particular tree should be reproduced, or that you should recall some individual example of it in your experience, but that you should recall the ideas gathered from many experiences. I appeal, therefore, to a plane which might very well be described as quiescent in you, and yet serves as a foundation, or a last end, in which the idea I seek to convey may terminate. This is the use that is served in every illustration. It is the calling up in the mind of something that may give a certain boundary to the thought, and provide something fixed, in which it may rest.

The plane of the natural memory, with what are called its "corporeal natural affections," which are its dispositions and acquired states in relation to natural things, is fixed on leaving this world. It does not extend. Neither does it diminish. Nothing can be added to it, although it can be filled interiorly more and more to eternity. Nothing is ever taken away from it. It remains as the ultimate of thought.

Something of its indispensability may be realised when we remember that if it were not for our knowledge of natural things now, it would be utterly impossible for a single spiritual idea to be conveyed to any of us. Our whole vocabulary of spiritual affairs and experiences—the vocabulary I am obliged to use in speaking to you now—is made up of, or produced from, natural figures. It is a natural figure, as I have already shown—a step—that gives us our first conception of degrees, that provides the very word wherewith we clothe and express the spiritual idea. The natural thing becomes quiescent in the mind. We are hardly aware of its presence until it is pointed out or recalled.

Nevertheless, there it remains, tacitly present, in the term, and in the thing of which the term is only a sign. It is the very foundation—the last point—in which the thought terminates.

So with Influx—the movement of a stream. As soon as we come to look into the term we find it a natural figure, the expression of an idea appearing in natural processes and forms. We cannot get away from the basis. We may cease to be conscious of it, for it does not assert itself. The mind, consciously or unconsciously, interprets it into an abstract or spiritual conception and, thereafter, forgets or ignores its natural existence, but the natural remains as the boundary and the basis of the thing that would otherwise be without "a local habitation, and a name."

So, also, with Ultimates, which are simply ends, terminations, outmosts, coverings, skins, cups, containing vessels, the very things in which we see with our natural eyes a closing down, and finishing off of all the forms of the natural world.

When we talk of the plane of action and use, of doing and working—the practical plane of the every-day life—as that of "ultimates"; when we say that the dreams and ambitions of youth, and the aspirations and ideals of any and every period, that are not ultimated—that is, that are not bounded, contained, terminated, and fixed in the outward life—have no existence because they have no re-active plane for the reception of influx from heaven, having nothing to correspond with them in the extremes of the mind; when we say they are as phantoms, the baseless fabric of a vision which must pass, leaving not a wrack behind; whenever we talk or think in this way we are either consciously or unconsciously depending on the basis of the natural figure for our imagery. We are finding it and appealing to it either in the ultimates of matter, which are temporary; or in those of the natural mind, extracted from matter, which are to endure for ever.

So also with the rest of our terminology—a word which, by the way, signifies the science of ends. All words are thought-ends. We speak of "planes," which are simply natural levels of earth, or of air. We represent them by horizontal lines. We speak of "spheres," which are natural globes, or balls, or circles. We have a great deal to say about "heights" and "depths," "intervals," and "successions," "centres," and "circumferences," "ins" and "outs," "upwards" and "downwards," "movements," "relations," "connections"—What are they all but the mind's perceptions of things that appear in nature? We do not think of this when we are using them as the clothing and the expressions of interior or spiritual things. As natural figures they are quiescent in us. Nevertheless, they are all obtained from nature, and they indicate the boundaries of the mind, the plane of its reception and its reactions, the terminations of all its thinking, and the cutaneous covering or skin of the spiritual body. If the mind could not think into these forms, it could not think at all.

The subject is one which is calculated to give us pause. For it brings us face to face with the fact that in the providing of this clothing of the mind—this boundary into which our thoughts must hereafter flow and according to which they will terminate and take shape—we are actively engaged. We build the wall which is to be the fixed ultimate and containing vessel of spiritual thought. For we may not lose sight of the fact, on which I laid some stress in dealing with the subject of influx, that there is no influx into the mind from natural things, which are external, but only from spiritual things which are internal; and that the effect of the influx is according to the preparation made for its reception. Natural things do not flow into the mind and form ultimates there, but the mind goes out to natural things to gather material. It induces or attaches external things to itself, and varies its form in accordance with them. It exercises at all times, within definite limits, its inalienable liberty of choice. It selects the things in which it finds most interest, or that give it most pleasure; that is, the things which are most in harmony with itself. It rejects, or turns away from, the things that are not in harmony. This is its birthright of freedom. It selects for its environment, from everyday happenings, from books, from the letter of the Word, materials for its wall. It is not compelled to see, or to hear, or to appropriate everything that enters into its environment. As a matter of fact, it cannot do other than select. For it is limited as to its capacity, and cannot contain more than a part. It must choose, and, according to its choice, the walls of the subjective world, which is to be the enduring house of its life, are gradually built up. Not a stone in it, not a line, or a turn, or a shape, or a colour, or a quality, that does not indicate a deliberate choice, a free turning of the mind, and yielding of the attention. Nor can it be said that the choice is determined by the unbidden impulses of an inherited and irresponsible will for it is not a blind choosing. Things not imbibed in freedom are not received at all. The understanding has its influx from heaven, and there is always the dictate given, and always the wonderful equilibrium maintained in which the freedom is secured.

It is in ultimates that the way is prepared for the opening up of the higher planes of consciousness which give us the return journey to the Source of our being.

From the resisting plane of these last things, the great throw of life, like the boomerang, comes back to the hand of the Thrower.

Man is a trine of soul, mind and body; not necessarily a material body, for this is only a temporary addition—it forms no real part of the trine—but a spiritual body which resembles the material. The soul itself is such a trine, for we remember it is the whole man, and not merely a part. The mind, also, is such a trine. Outwardly it is natural, inwardly it is spiritual, and inmostly it is celestial. And each of these is a trine in itself. Each has an outmost degree, an inner or middle degree, and an inmost degree, which are related to one another as the effect to the cause, and the cause to the end. Or we may say of the man that he is in outmosts, a natural man, adapted in all respects to the reception and understanding of natural things; and within the natural man he is a spiritual man, capable of receiving the spiritual things which terminate in his natural; and within this spiritual man he is a celestial man, all fully equipped for the realising of those things of heaven and the Lord which are based upon his spiritual and natural. And all are comprehended and exist simultaneously in the ultimates of his life, in which they may be seen in their fulness and power. He thinks, and speaks, and acts now, and will continue to think, speak, and act, from those interior things, in their three degrees, into ultimates. He lives and manifests his existence to our ears, and to our eyes, in the familiar movements of the human form, which is the image and likeness of the Divine.

And the inmost of all now and for ever is the Spiritual Sun whose soul is the Lord Himself, and His is all the kingdom and the power and the glory.

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